2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
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division between nature and society was expressed in a variety of ways. Clearest perhaps was the ethical prescription that while it is evil for a Badaga to kill people he does good in the eyes of the community *and of God* if he kills Kurumbas or tigers, 'since these are both murderers' (as the matter was once explained to me). The Badagas have always been what would popularly be termed a most superstitious people: they suspect the sorcerer's artifice behind every noise in the jungle, every unexplained malady, every strange event; and they glean a multitude of tidings, both good and bad, from the everyday behaviour of snakes, crows, jackals, cattle and dozens of other creatures and conditions that surround them. A further indication of the gulf between nature and society is perhaps that in their pre-British law the severest Badaga punishment short of hanging was ostracism—expulsion from the village; and this was reserved for the enormity of incest.[2]

For an Indian peasant society the Badagas have some quite extraordinary features, fit to provide enough exotica for any undergraduate anthropology course. This fact has not been duly appreciated by the dozens of ethnologists who have come to the Nilgiris and attached themselves with passion to the colourful Todas or the shy jungle tribes. The Badagas may outwardly appear a much more 'typical' Indian farming community, and yet they do not have true subcastes or multicaste villages; they practise hypergamy *and* hypogamy even across the vegetarian boundary; several forms of polygamy are acceptable; they have a sort of young men's house; marriage is permitted across generation levels to the point where a man may in theory marry a woman *and* her daughter *and* her mother simultaneously, and villages hold a memorial ceremony once in fifty years when every member of a generation has died. Add to these features the frequent ghost exorcisms, fire-walking and occasional massacres, and the anthropologist has much to explain.

THE TERRAIN

The Nilgiri Hills, also known as the Blue Mountains, constitute a massif some 1500 sq. km. in area, situated in southern India at the juncture of the three linguistic and cultural areas of Karnatak Malabar and Tamilnad. In the British period it was an administrative unit of the Madras Presidency. Today the Nilgiris form on

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
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Irregular Transactions

As a general rule Badagas, Kotas and Todas shift their cattle to new grazing independently of each other, at the beginning of each year. At present Kota and Badaga cattle are so few that it is rarely necessary to move them at all; but the Todas still practise transhumance within the limits of the plateau, occasionally with Badaga cattle mixed among their own. It was previously common for Badagas to participate in the annual migration of the Toda buffaloes; and sometimes they entrusted their buffaloes to the Toda partners, to take them to better summer grazing on the southern edge of the plateau (Ward, 1821, lxxiii; Rivers, 1906, 133, 137; Ranga, 1934, 24). There the Todas would mix their own herds with the Badaga buffaloes and enjoy the use of their milk, until they were returned home at the approach of the June monsoon.

Badagas and Todas sometimes exchange buffaloes in order to get others of more useful age or yield.[10] This barter only involves female animals and is typically the exchange of one buffalo of good yield for two of lower yield. Todas may also get non-sacred buffaloes from Badaga friends when they suddenly need the animals for sacrifice at a Toda funeral or sell them to Badagas when they need cash. Any difference outstanding after such transactions was formerly paid on the Badaga side by grain, cloth, or gold and silver ornaments; and on the Toda side by various bamboo and basketry articles. More recently the differences have been made up with money alone.

Todas sometimes ask their Badaga partners for financial loans. In the nineteenth century if the request produced no immediate result they would mortgage buffaloes to wealthy Badagas as security for a loan (Marshall, 1873, 130). Today one can still find Badagas lending money merely out of fear of the Todas' sorcery.

Sometimes when a Badaga wants to indulge in some illicit sexual activity he may ask his Toda partner to lend his own wife or find him a Toda girl; but as Toda women are generally rather free in their interaction with non-Todas it is usually no problem for the Badaga to importune a girl himself. Todas on the other hand have virtually no opportunity for intercourse with Badaga women. (Such at least is what reliable Badagas have said; the Toda men deny any such relations between the two communities.)[11]

Although it has not occurred within living memory, 'It was

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
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177 formerly a common practice for rich Badagas to hire forty or fifty Todas to go on wife-stealing expeditions, and carry off by force the (684) wives of other Badagas' (Metz, 1864, 75). Today, while the practice of stealing wives may continue, assistance from the Todas is no longer required. A parallel situation in which gangs of Badagas used to help Todas steal wives is also recalled. In either case the assistants each received a few rupees.

(181) (609) Badagas are very fond of betting; and so when they meet informally a Badaga and a Toda sometimes have a bet over the possibility of their performing some athletic feat, such as lifting a boulder (Rivers, 1906, 597–598).

Medicine is another matter that can bring Todas and Badagas together. Although Todas have therapists in their own tribe they occasionally go to Badagas noted for particular kinds of cure (Rivers, 1906, 323, 634–635; for details of Badaga therapy, see Hockings, 1979b). A Badaga partner may help the Toda arrange treatment; but the therapist himself usually expects some fee or present from the patient.

(648) Todas are considered moderately powerful sorcerers, despite their own recent disclaimers. It was for this reason that the parties of Badagas who went to massacre Kurumbas always included one or two Toda associates to deliver 'the first blow'.[12] This practice has not recurred since 1900; nor have Badagas murdered a Toda sorcerer since that time.

A few affluent Todas (affluent because of illicit land rentals)[13] now live in Badaga-style brick houses instead of the customary thatched huts, as the houses are more spacious and comfortable. This habit began some eighty years ago (Rivers, 1906, 29, 634). The Badaga-style houses (distinct from modern government-financed housing) are built in a Toda hamlet by Badagas hired for the purpose but not necessarily by a man's Badaga partner.

Ritual Interaction

177 796 (224) A common setting for interaction between the two communities is ceremonial. On some Badaga festival days the Toda may be required to bring the sticks and make fire by friction or perhaps bring a new milking vessel. For the annual hunting ceremony of Be:da Sa:mi held by both Badagas and Kotas, the Toda used to bring clarified butter to smear on the weapons. Even so, no very

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
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Lovers and Prostitutes

3.6. Badaga girls used to be married shortly after puberty and youths in their late adolescence. Various social pressures, most importantly the new educational requirements, have increased these ages until today a girl gets married at about 16 and a young man in his early 20s. Since births are not registered it is possible for parents to claim their daughter is older than she really is at marriage: recent legislation about age at marriage (18 for girls, 21 for men) might sometimes prompt them to do so.

One effect of this raising of the appropriate age for marriage has been an increase in premarital sex activity among male youths. The corresponding phenomenon does not seem to have occurred among the girls, however; quite the opposite, in fact. I was told that a "double standard" has recently appeared, in that if an unmarried man is known to be having an affair he is not thought badly of, whereas if a young woman does so she is mocked by other villagers and considered very immoral. This development has come about since mid-century because of changing attitudes towards pregnancy. In earlier days an unmarried girl would have affairs without any great fear of pregnancy, because she knew that if she did become pregnant she could go before the village council, name the father, and he would be forced to marry the girl concerned. She only had to assert that a man was the father and he would have to marry and support her — even if he already had a wife. Should a man refuse to accept the council's decision on the matter he could be outcasted and ordered out of the village, his property divided among his brothers, and a share of it given to support the pregnant girl. This, rather than an abortion, was the normal procedure. Today an unmarried woman is very circumspect even if she has reached the age of 30. She knows that a ruined reputation can spoil her chances of an advantageous marriage, and the village council has little power to force a wayward man into marrying or supporting her today.

3.7. As with much else in Indian social organization, there is a hierarchy in the frequency and acceptability of extra-marital sexual partners, as outlined below.

(*a*) Most frequently chosen is a girl related as affine to a boy; they are a couple who might later marry without offence. Usually this means the girl would have to be of the same phratry but a different clan, and live in a different village from the boy's. If the parents

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
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by a Kurumba who used magic to get her. How else could he have succeeded?

Nowadays the patronizing of lowland prostitutes is seemingly more common than are casual relationships with Toda or Kota girls or for that matter local Kanarese or Tamilian girls. The choice of a prostitute is a matter of personal taste. Some men do not mind older women, others want them very young; some prefer Anglo-Indians, others Malayalis, and so on. The deciding factor is usually what one can pay. Both the main towns of the Nilgiris, Coonoor and Ootacamund, have a variety of women available. The pimps one approaches do not keep the girls, but can call them from their houses; a client has to pay the pimp, not the girl. During the main tourist season a crew of high-class prostitutes is maintained in, but not by, the main Ootacamund hotels. These women circulate from one hotel to another every few days. At the other end of the scale one occasionally encounters village prostitutes. In a typical case a lowland man kept two non-Badaga women, whom he claimed to be his wife and her sister, but whom he made available to anybody for a small payment.

(*f*) Intercourse with Badaga girls born in one's own village is technically incestuous and as such is frowned upon. Nonetheless men do sometimes have affairs with their parallel cousins who, in kinship terminology, would be called "sisters." It a girl visits a neighbour's house too often, or a youth from that house finds reasons to visit hers, their families get suspicious about the matter. They tell him to go away while the girl is present, or else ask her why she has to visit at this particular time. If such hints do not suffice, the girl may find herself quickly married to somebody else in another village.

(*g*) Real intrafamilial incest is extremely rare, except in the common case of a man having relations with the wife of an elder brother, a matter that can usually be excused. I know of few instances of genuine incest, but can present as meagre evidence of Badagas having an incest wish the fact that a tale about it is told repeatedly and listened to eagerly. This tale, supposedly of Tamil origin, is about a man whose wife died and who then had relations with his own daughter, thinking of her as a fruit that he had grown himself and would now enjoy. There are heavy prohibitions on sexual intercourse between a brother and sister. Were relations to occur between them their entire family would be despised. A brother and sister should not even sit together and talk in front of their elders. In fact affection

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
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between the two, or between a father and his daughter, has often led to a divorce.

In the estimate of one good informant, when incest occurs within the family it is most often with an elder brother's wife, and less commonly with a son's wife or with the father's second wife when she is a man's stepmother. Mother/son, father/daughter and brother/sister relations are the rarest of all, if indeed they ever occur.

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The above seven types of illicit relationship are listed in my informant's order, going from (*a*) the most common but least serious, to (*g*), the most uncommon and offensive. Despite the considerable amount of evidence collected on these various types, I was told by old people that it used to be thought a very bad thing for a husband to commit adultery, and if his wife or another person found out about it she would go to the village headman who would call a meeting of the council and then fine the guilty person: in adultery the man was always at fault.

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Among Badagas the public attitude towards a cuckolded husband is that he is a foolish, weak and lazy man, for otherwise his wife could not have been led astray. However, his wife also loses all respect with the other village women, who may well fear that they could lose their own husbands to her too. Nor can the adulterous man expect any accolades for his behaviour. Today a case of adultery may go before a council, which can still fine the adulterer; or her husband may quietly divorce an adulterous wife; or he might give the adulterer a beating, provided he had some alternate explanation for it to offer his neighbours.

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Attitudes towards extra-marital love and prostitution are clearly expressed in Badaga proverbs and legends. Witness the following still current proverbs: "Three things are equal to each other: a harlot, an adulterer, and a piece of ground which is always in danger of being washed away by a river" (Metz 1864: 97); "If the food is spoiled, the day is spoiled; if the wife is spoiled, one's life is spoiled;" "The immoral woman will not believe her own husband;" "The whoremonger will vanish away like a handful of wind" (Metz 1864: 98); and again, "Lust is deceitful, I have lost my blanket through it" (Metz 1864: 96). A few lines from an epic poem conjure up a vision of limbo that is worthy of Dante's *Inferno :*

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9: Natesa Sastri U-5 (no date) 1892
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to their own country they preferred to settle down as the cultivators of the Tôḍa-lands, acknowledging the Tôḍas as their landlords, and themselves taking up the humble position of farmers under them; and the lazy Tôḍa who was extremely glad to get people to cultivate his lands was thoroughly satisfied with this arrangement. Even to this day the Baḍagas, in acknowledgment of their subordination to the Tôḍas, pay their *Gûḍu*—their tenants' fee—to these landlords of the Nîlagiris.

Another fact that seems to indicate that the Baḍagas are immigrants is that a crude kind of polyandry exists among them. Baḍaga society allows this practice, and it is not uncommon when a man has five sons for only one of them to be married, though Baḍagas when questioned about it stoutly deny the existence of this custom. If the marriage tie is in this respect somewhat lax, the Baḍaga rules in other ways are very strict, and a woman would be at once out-cast.d who went astray with a person of a different caste. The existence of this custom among the Baḍagas is, as has been said, probably to be explained by the fact that they are immigrants. Naturally most of those who came up from Maisûr would be men, and the hardships consequent upon the great change of climate and habits of life would tell more severely upon the women than upon the hardier male sex. The practice of polyandry having thus been allowed to gr.w up obtained the sanction of custom, and still prevails as a caste-rule to which little or no objection is made.

This custom, the existence of all crafts and arts among themselves, and the payments of *Gûḍu* in recognition of the Tôḍas as their landlords, are three very strong proofs of the contention that the Baḍagas are only colonists on these hills, and are not the original inhabitants.

There are several sects among the Baḍagas. Mr. Grigg enumerates eighteen—seven major and eleven minor. From the results of my researches I consider that all these eighteen may be simplified into six—five high-caste and one low-caste.

They are

1. Uḍaya
2. Hâruva
3. Adhikâri } (High caste.)
4. Kaṇaka
5. Baḍaga
6. Toraya ... (Low caste.)

Uḍayas are Lingâyats in religion and carry the *Śivaliṅga*—the

795 If more than one have to receive the *Linga* on the same day each of them has to undergo this ceremony. After the ceremony is [793] over the priest returns to his village with the rice, &c., and fees. [796] Every house in which a boy has received the *Linga* has to give a grand feast that day. Even the poorest Badaga must feed five other Badagas at least.

Thus closes the Linga-wearing ceremony of the Badaga boy, after which he passes through no additional ceremony. He spends his time now in milking the buffaloes, now in the fields, and is thus always preparing himself to become in the future the responsible head of a Badaga family.

121 Before we speak of the ceremonies connected with the courtship and marriage of a Badaga youth and of those which are due to him at the time of and after his death, which we shall dwell upon at their proper place, we shall turn our attention to a Badaga female-child and trace her from her birth to her marriage. As soon as a female-
584 child is born, some of her relations who are in a position to contract a marriage relationship bespeak the baby, and arrange for her to be married at the proper age to such and such a boy. In consideration of this they give Rs. 10 as a fee. This is everything to the girl and her price cannot afterwards be enhanced even though when she grows up she may be worth more—even as much as Rs. 200 which is the highest rate prevailing among them. Even when a girl is thus bespoken, all the forms connected with the courtship and marriage which I am about to describe are observed except the one of handing over the price of the girl, which in such a case has already been paid. This custom of contracting relationship is rare but it does occur in
[684] ten out of a hundred cases. Violations of this kind of marriage are considered very ungentlemanly but they are not infrequent. The fine for such violations is after all very light, being merely the return of the Rs. 10 formerly paid for the girl when the infant was bespoken.

561 Let us now go back to the baby and suppose her not to be thus
852 bespoken. She has no rites or any observances to undergo till she becomes of a marriageable age. She then leaves her parents' house and goes to a building called the *Hola-Gudi*. This *Hola-*
881 *Gudi* is a public place reserved exclusively for women and grown up
(591) girls, and is a building that every Badaga village contains. She is presented with a new cloth by her parents and remains in the *Hola-Gudi* till the next full-moon day. All the families in the village bring to her one measure of wheat or *Korali* flour from each

9: Natesa Sastri U-5 (no date) 1892

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622 584 [623] be married to a boy in another village, the parents of the young people have to represent the matter to the Monegars of their respective villages. This is done after the courtship stage has been reached and the young people have agreed to marry one another, but even then if for any reason the Monegar forbids the contracting of the marriage the matter must at once stop, and no appeal to any higher authority is possible. Such a thing rarely occurs, but when it does there is no remedy, except that it may be possible to induce the Monegar to alter his decision by means of a judiciously administered bribe.

595 622 627 681 Owing to the existence of polyandry and ideas connected with it, things that would be regarded by other peoples as the gravest offences against morality are tolerated or even approved of by Badaga public opinion. Offences against the curious rules for the regulation of family life that obtain among the Badagas are brought to the village Monegar, who punishes the culprits by inflicting fines upon them. But however lax the Badagas may be in their ideas of morality within the family, they regard with the greatest displeasure and visit with the severest punishment any one who goes astray with a man of another caste, even though he be of the Brahman caste. The village Monegar conducts an enquiry, and if he finds the guilt of the accused person proved, he pronounces sentence of excommunication and the unfortunate woman loses her caste and is driven from the community.

622 627 586 [623] 586 The village Monegar is also president of the divorce court—for, as was stated in my previous article, divorce, which is not uncommon in the Badaga community, can, after the cord-tying ceremony has been performed, be granted only by a regular decision of the Monegar and his village council. If a man and his wife do not like one another they have to bring the matter before the Monegar. He assembles a court, and himself acting as its president sanctions a separation or deals with the matter otherwise. If separation is ordered the person who is to take the divorced woman as his wife returns the *Sila haṇé* or cloth money (Rs. 1½), and the price originally paid to her by her first husband. The children, if there be any, belong to the father. The woman if she dislikes her second husband may apply for a second separation. Society does not look upon her as a bad woman because of these divorces or separations, and recognises all her children as lawfully born Badagas.

621 622 623 725 One more illustration may be given of the functions of the Monegar and the village council. If any Badaga family becomes very